



# Indiana State Department of Health Laboratory

## West Nile Dead Bird Submission

SF 50534 (R/5-02)

We are asking for submission of dead birds (limited to crows, blue jays, raptors and exotic birds).  
See reverse side for instructions.

Person Completing Form:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Reporting Dead Bird(s):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of initial report: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Location of bird(s):

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Date bird was found: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Date bird collected: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Number of birds found dead: \_\_\_\_\_ Any evidence of trauma: yes no

Species of bird: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of shipping to the Indiana State Department of Health Laboratory: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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Birds should only be submitted for testing if there is no obvious cause of death and if the specimen is fresh (dead for <48 hours). Birds with maggots are not acceptable.

Please enclose this completed form with the dead bird shipment and also FAX the form to:  
Indiana State Department of Health Laboratory: Attn: Molecular Lab (317) 233-8063.

Please call (317)233-8050 or (317)233-8097 at ISDH with any questions.

Shipping Address: Indiana State Department of Health Laboratories  
Molecular Laboratory Room MS 2023  
635 N. Barnhill Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-5120

If shipping by U.S Mail Indiana State Department of Health Laboratories  
Molecular Laboratory  
PO Box 7203  
Indianapolis, IN 46207-7203

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ISDH Lab Use Only

ISDH Lab Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Assay Results: \_\_\_\_\_

## Instructions for Collection and Shipment of Bird Carcasses for West Nile Virus Evaluation

Collect sick or freshly dead birds (dead for < 48 hours). Carcasses that are decomposed, maggot infested, or scavenged are usually of limited diagnostic value. Ideally, collect a combination of freshly dead birds and birds that were euthanized after their abnormal behavior was observed and recorded. When possible, take along a cooler containing blue ice or other commercially available cool pack to immediately chill the carcass(es) upon collection. Because WNV attacks the nervous system of crows and other birds; still living, but ill birds, may be unable to fly and may be found on the ground (or possibly struck by a vehicle because the bird was unable to fly properly). **We are not interested in testing any bird found in an area with several dead birds - such a situation would reflect poison exposure.**

Use rubber gloves when picking up dead birds. If you do not have gloves, insert your hand into a plastic bag, pick up bird, and invert bag-allowing hands to remain covered while collecting bird.

**Complete a "West Nile Virus Dead Bird Submission Form" for each bird submitted for testing.** Additional information can be attached to the form. When possible, FAX a copy of the form(s) to the Molecular Lab (317) 233-8063. **Place submission form in an envelope and tape to the outside of the shipping container.**

If more than one bird is submitted, please uniquely identify each bird and it's corresponding Submission Form. Place each individual bird in a plastic bag with it's unique identification if needed, tie shut, then place inside a second bag and tie shut (more than one individually bagged bird can be placed in the second bag). This system of double bagging prevents cross-contamination of individual specimens and leaking from shipping containers that can contaminate vehicle surfaces and handlers during transportation. Use enough coolant to keep the carcasses cold during shipment. **Do not use wet ice. Do not use dry ice unless instructed to do so.** Place crumpled newspaper or similar absorbent material in the cooler with the bagged carcasses to fill unused space, provide insulation, and absorb any liquids. Tape cooler or box shut with strapping tape. **PLACE ALL PAPERWORK IN AN ENVELOPE AND TAPE TO THE OUTSIDE OF THE SHIPPING CONTAINER.**

When shipping birds in a hard-sided plastic cooler or a Styrofoam cooler, place the cooler in a cardboard box. Unprotected Styrofoam coolers break into pieces during shipment. Stuff newspaper in any space between the sides of the box and cooler. Hard-sided (plastic) coolers will be returned if labeled with your name and address.

Ship Monday through Thursday morning to guarantee arrival at the laboratory before the weekend. If specimens are fresh and need to be shipped on Friday, you must call to make special arrangements.

The laboratory prefers unfrozen specimens if they can be sent within 24 hours of collection or death. Freezing and thawing can damage tissues and make isolation/identification of some pathogens difficult. We will provide guidance on when, or if to freeze, samples on a case by case basis. If you are in the field and cannot call or ship within 24-36 hours, freeze the bird(s).